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FROM U.S. MISSION IN ROME

STATE FOR IO/EDA, AF/W, NEA/ENA, OES/ENV; PASS EPA
USAID FOR DCHA, OFDA GOTTLIEB AND AFR LAVELLE
USDA FOR FAS HUGHES
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SUBJECT: DESERT LOCUSTS: FAO'S WORK ON PESTICIDES AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

REF: (A) 04 ROME 0722; (B) 04 ROME 3979; (C) 04 ROME 3581;
(D) 05 ROME 0764 (E) 05 ROME 1451

1. Summary: In a letter dated April 16, 2005, the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Director-General Jacques Diouf alerted the international donor community to a potential problem with pesticides overstocks in Sahelian and North African countries currently embattling desert locusts. In this letter, FAO, as the lead UN agency combating desert locusts, requested better coordination and communication of pesticides donations, noting that excess stocks potentially could pose an environmental problem. Since the alert, FAO has been actively monitoring pesticides stocks in affected countries and is developing programs to protect pesticides operators from health risks. Through informal and formal consultations, USUN/Rome received an updated FAO pesticides monitoring matrix for the Sahel, container crushing programs, health monitoring teams, and farmer field school modules on pesticides. End Summary

Pesticides in the Sahel and Maghreb

2. As of an FAO inventory updated July 31, a stock of 2.107 million liters is available in the Sahelian countries of Chad (119,583), Mali (261,613), Mauritania (580,392), Niger (232,495), and Senegal (913,905) to cover more than a worst-case scenario. The total amount used during the 2004-2005 campaign was estimated at 2.176 million liters. During a July 21st desert locusts donors' meeting, FAO DG Diouf repeatedly stated that the coordination of pesticides delivery was much harder than expected at the beginning of operations due to numerous bilateral donations that were not being communicated to FAO, including the 250,000 liters Morocco's King Mohamed VI donated to Senegal in March 2005. If excess pesticide overstocks cannot be used, either for desert locusts or other pests, or solutions for their long-term storage cannot be found, FAO may be forced to return some bilateral donations to donors. In the interim, FAO is working with donors to modify budget lines from 'pesticides purchases' to 'pesticides storage construction/management' and/or meeting other urgent needs.

3. According to a March 31 inventory, FAO indicated that 3.517 million liters are available in the Maghreb as follows: Algeria (1,622,600); Morocco (1,545,002); and Tunisia (350,000). Libya's inventory is not yet complete.

Storage Facilities

4. FAO is working on long-term pesticides storage solutions. For example, the Government of Mauritania donated five acres for FAO to build new facilities in Nouakchott. FAO began the tendering process and hopes to begin construction of a pesticide storage facility in August/September, with a December 2005 completion date. This facility will be a model for the construction of similar facilities in

neighboring countries.

5. Meanwhile, older storage facilities are being refurbished in Chad (3), Mali (5), Mauritania (5), and Senegal (4) where FAO is working with the Direction de la Protection des Vgtaux (DPV) to rehabilitate two former fumigation facilities at Dakar's port. The DPV is acquiring land six kilometers outside Dakar to construct a national pesticides center.

Bio-friendly Pesticides

16. Large-scale trials on the bio-pesticide metarhizium, more commonly known as "Green Muscle," concluded successfully in Algeria, with a 100 percent efficacy rate in a five-to-seven-day period. A similar trial also took place in Mauritania. Another follow-up trial taking into account less favorable weather and environmental conditions is currently being set up in Niger.

17. At the July 21 desert locust donors' meeting, the director of FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP) reported that additional ecological studies are being conducted in Khartoum, Sudan.

Container Crushing

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18. FAO reported on a large regional program to rehabilitate pesticide containers. In Niger and Senegal, the collection of empty pesticide drums for rinsing, crushing and recycling has been completed, while drums are being collected in Mali, where there may be a risk of leakage. In side meetings with USUN/Rome, FAO staff stated that it is in consultations with the 1) World Bank to split the costs of approximately \$300,000 for a clean-up program in Mali, and 2) the European Commission on reallocating \$350,000 in four or five country programs for pesticide disposal.

19. During the week of July 15, two FAO staff members traveled to Mauritania to operationalize a new container crusher, which had arrived from the United States earlier this summer. The crusher will be able to crush the 27,000 barrels in Mauritania within six months (approximately one every five minutes). FAO plans to purchase additional crushers for Mali, Senegal, Niger and Chad, with the option that they be shared with neighboring countries.

110. From August 2-5 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, FAO will host a regional workshop on the management of empty pesticides containers and pesticides stocks. Representatives from 14 affected countries have been invited for a 1) practical demonstration on cleaning and crushing empty containers; 2) review of risk evaluation and security measures; and 3) an overview of the implementation of national pesticides management programs. FAO has identified a couple places in Mauritania and Senegal where crushed barrels could be recycled, and plans to hold a recycling workshop in Dakar

later this year. In addition, FAO is identifying a possible metal and plastics recycler in Cote d'Ivoire.

Health Monitoring Teams

111. FAO is also deploying special teams to monitor the health of workers using pesticides, the efficacy of spray applications, and the possible side effects on water, soil, flora and fauna. The collection of the workers' basic health data and blood sampling has already begun in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, and training will be conducted in these countries as well as Burkina Faso and Senegal from August 5-31. In conjunction with the training, FAO will launch a publicity campaign targeted at local communities by disseminating an information brochure in local languages.

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Farmer Field Schools and Pesticides Education

112. The Farmer Field School (FFS) method is a non-formal, participatory educational approach developed in the 1990's in Indonesia to educate farmers on ecology, soil fertility, and plant biology. Based on the U.S. model of adult education, FFS is an iterative method, working with farmers to investigate and supplement their knowledge of farming methods. An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) component was incorporated to FFS to relieve farmers of any misconceptions they have on insects. For example, not all insects crawling in a rice paddy are bad, and thus farmers are taught how to defoliate without harming the crop.

113. During the previous desert locust campaign, it is believed that pesticides made it to the Senegal River basin. River populations were quite vocal about the need to be more involved in combating desert locusts. FAO is working to include desert locust modules within FFS so as to protect both crops and farmers in a responsible and safe way. FAO's AGP division has committed \$450,000 for a pilot project, and is currently exploring a letter of agreement with one of the largest nongovernmental organizations in West Africa to interview farmers and develop a curriculum and training materials. The pilot hopes to train 100,000 farmers in four

years in eight countries, including Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso. USUN/Rome will continue to report on the desert locust component of FFS.

14. Minimize considered.

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